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ABSTRACT

The analysis of racial differences has been a popular undertaking for social scientists, perhaps because it seems to be easy to do and it yields interesting differences. This study raises the possibility that the frequent finding of higher self-esteem scores among blacks compared with whites may be attributable, at least in part, to black-white differences in response styles. Blacks are more likely than whites to use the extreme response categories in Likert-type questionnaire items. This general tendency has important implications for black-white comparisons along self-esteem dimensions. Analyses of six large-scale nationally representative surveys of high school students revealed that blacks score significantly higher than whites when the full scale range is used in computing self-esteem scores, but the black-white discrepancy disappears when a truncated scoring method is employed to control differences in use of extreme response categories. Any firm conclusions about racial differences in self-esteem lie beyond reach with current data. Race differences in general response styles, and in responses to particular self-esteem items, leave any specific self-esteem measure and scoring open to dispute. (Author/ABL)

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THE IMPACTS OF RESPONSE STYLES ON BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCES IN SELF-ESTEEM: AN ANALYSIS OF SIX SAMPLES OF YOUTH

Jerald G. Bachman
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Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper 16

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1983

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ABSTRACT

Blacks are more likely than whites to use the extreme response categories in Likert-type questionnaire items. This general tendency has important implications for black-white comparisons along self-esteem dimensions. Analyses of several large-scale nationally representative surveys of high school students reveal that (a) blacks score significantly higher than whites when the full scale range is used in computing self-esteem scores, but (b) the black-white discrepancy disappears when a truncated scoring method is employed to control differences in use of extreme response categories.

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of racial differences has been a popular undertaking for social scientists, perhaps because it is--or seems to be--easy to do, and also because it often yields interesting differences. Certainly this has been the case with self-esteem. However, this paper raises the possibility that the frequent finding of higher self-esteem scores among blacks compared with whites may be attributable, at least in part, to black-white differences in response styles.

It is not without trepidation that we enter into areas that have generated so much controversy: black-white differences, the concept and measurement of self-esteem, and the problems introduced by response styles. There is a very extensive literature on the self-concept, which has been reviewed and evaluated by Wylie (1974,1979). Black-white differences in self-esteem have also been researched and summarized extensively, as we note below. And the issue of whether and how response styles impact on psychological measures has prompted numerous articles and chapters, with titles including "the great response-style myth" (Rorer 1965) and "the acquiescence quagmire" (Schuman and Presser 1981). Although the present paper involves each of these areas to some extent, we do not claim that it will resolve any of the controversies; in fact, it may add to them. Nevertheless, we think this reporting is useful because the findings themselves are clear and consistent, and the issues they raise are important.

The literature involving black self-esteem is full of conflicts and contradictions. "Until the late 1960s it was an axiom of social science that white discrimination and segregation depressed and debilitated the psyche of the average black person in this country..." (Taylor and Walsh 1979, p. 242). But a number of recent reports on self-esteem (Rosenberg and Simmons 1972; Taylor and Walsh 1979; Harris and Stokes 1978; Porter and Washington 1979; Simmons, Brown,Bush and Blyth 1978-9) reach conclusions similar to those stated by Drury: "A review of contemporary literature, focusing on studies based on more substantial samples and employing relatively direct measures of self-esteem, provides little justification for the assumption that blacks evaluate themselves less highly than whites. Indeed, the preponderance of evidence supports the opposite conclusion" (1980, p.89). Drury goes on to list 15 comparisons showing higher self-esteem among blacks, five showing higher self-esteem among whites, and four showing no difference. Wylie is appropriately cautious about drawing conclusions based on her review of 59 studies involving racial differences in self-regard, since there are many flaws and idiosyncrasies in the research; still, she takes a view similar to Drury's, stating that the results of these studies "...place the burden of proof on those who have contended that the derogated, disadvantaged social position of the blacks in the United States must obviously have resulted in seriously damaged self-esteem in that group" (1979, p. 192).

Although the recent findings concerning black self-esteem have prompted a variety of theoretical explanations and much vigorous debate about whether blacks really have higher self-esteem than whites (for summaries, see Wylie 1979; Porter and Washington 1979; Taylor and Walsh 1979), our focus in the present paper is on a more limited methodological issue. We are interested in the extent to which self-esteem scores are influenced by black-white differences in questionnaire response styles. The analyses reported here began serendipitously; our systematic exploration of self-esteem took place only after we became aware of a much more general difference between black and white high school seniors in their patterns of responding to Likert-type questionnaire items(see Bachman and O'Malley 1984). In the process of examining racial differences in response styles, we discovered that they have a significant impact on black-white differences in self-esteem scores. That discovery led to further analyses with several additional datasets, the results of which are reported here.

It has long been recognized that measures of abilities, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and personality are all potentially influenced by what have variously been termed response styles, response sets, or biases (Cronbach 1946, 1950; Berg 1967). We will follow Rorer's (1965) use of the term "response style" as referring to a tendency to favor particular response categories independent of the item content. Perhaps the most widely studied and reported response style is agreement or yea-saying--the tendency to agree with questions regardless of content (Couch and Keniston 1960). A related but less studied pattern has been termed the extreme response style--the tendency for some individuals to use the extreme ends of response scales (e.g., strongly agree, strongly disagree) while other individuals are more likely to use the middle values (e.g., mostly agree, mostly disagree) (Hamilton 1968). As Wylie points out, "...opinions of various authors regarding the occurrence and importance of acquiescent-response tendencies in personality testing cover all possibilities, from extreme importance...to extreme unimportance..." (1974, p. 73). It also has been argued that the agreement response style can be handled fairly readily: "For investigators who want to eliminate agreement response set from their studies, there is a relatively simple solution: use a balanced scale.... Thus the problem has been largely resolved..." (Oskamp 1977, p. 40). Even if that approach were adequate in the case of agreement (see Jackson 1967 for arguments to the contrary), the problem presented by the extreme response style is somewhat different, as we explain below.

Our own research on black-white differences in response styles indicates that blacks are more likely than whites to use the extreme response categories on a wide variety of questionnaire items which use several different Likert-type response scales and cover a wide range of topics. The effect is particularly strong for the positive "agree" end of agree-disagree scales, but also holds for the negative "disagree" end.

How do such variations in propensity to use the extreme response categories affect scores on global self-esteem scales of the sort developed by Rosenberg (1965) and widely used in studies of youth? As the data presented below indicate, the typical self-esteem item does not

prompt a wide range of responses from agreement to disagreement; on the contrary, large majorities (typically 70-90 percent) choose favorable self-esteem responses. In other words, most of the response variation lies in the extent of agreement (with positively worded items) or disagreement (with negatively worded ones). Thus, in order to gain a high self-esteem score, one must indicate strong or unqualified agreement and disagreement. Clearly, if some individuals or groups have a general propensity toward the extreme response categories, while others tend to inhibit or qualify their responses, these response style differences will influence self-esteem scores; specifically, those inclined toward the use of extreme response categories will tend to score higher on typical self-esteem scales. Moreover, unlike the agreement or acquiescence response style, the extreme response style is virtually unaffected by the use of "balanced" scales; "extreme responders" simply agree strongly with the positively worded items and disagree strongly with the negatively worded ones. One can, however, attempt to deal with variations in extreme response style by "collapsing" the scoring so as to eliminate distinctions in degree of agreement and disagreement; we illustrate such a strategy in our data analysis below.

Before presenting our findings with respect to self-esteem, a few general comments are in order concerning the extreme response style and black-white differences along that dimension. First, let us note that we employ the term "extreme response style" because it is widely used in the literature; but we could just as well emphasize the opposite end of the continuum and speak of the "cautious response style" or the "inhibited response style." Our earlier analysis of response styles and racial differences suggests that extreme responding is best treated as a continuum; while blacks and whites differ in central tendencies (a difference of .6 standard deviations between black and white mean scores on an index of extreme responding), both groups show roughly normal distributions with a considerable degree of overlap (Bachman and O'Malley 1984). Thus we are unwilling to treat differences in extreme response style as "response errors" on the part of any particular subgroup, nor do we wish to imply that responses from some individuals or groups are more "valid" than others simply because they differ in their propensities to use the end-points versus the middle categories in Likert-type scales. What we do want to say is that there are clear and moderately strong black-white differences in these propensities, and that such differences can significantly influence self-esteem scores. We now turn to the evidence in support of that assertion.

METHODS

Samples

Our analyses are based on six large-scale nationally representative samples of youth, each of which included the Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale or adaptations thereof. Since each of the studies has been described extensively elsewhere, we provide only brief summaries here. Table 1 provides key information for each of the six samples.

Table 1
Data Sets Used in Analyses

Study Name and References	Sample	Year of Survey	Mode of Administration	Response Scale (Original Scoring)	Approximate N Used in Analyses	
					Black	White
Monitoring the Future Bachman & Johnston, 1978	Seniors	1980, 1981, 1982	Questionnaires, group administered in schools	1=Disagree 2=Mostly disagree 3=Neither 4=Mostly agree 5=Agree	1119	7681
High School and Beyond NORC, 1980		1980		1=Agree strongly 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Disagree strongly 5=No opinion	3626	20763
High School and Beyond NORC, 1980	Sophomores				3752	21531
National Longitudinal Study Thompson, 1974	Seniors	1972			1969	12180
Youth in Transition Bachman, 1970	Sophomores	1966		1=Almost always true 2=Often true 3=Sometimes true 4=Seldom true 5=Never true	279	2141
National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience Center for Human Resource, 1981	Youth, 15-22 Years Old	1980	Personal Interview	1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree	3031	7169

Self-Esteem Scoring

Table 1 includes the response scales and the original coding for each of the six samples; however, in all subsequent tables the self-esteem items have been scored in ways which produce certain consistencies across items and samples. The "full scale scoring" in all cases assigns a score of "5" to the response showing greatest self-esteem, a score of "4" to the next most favorable response, a score of "1" to the response showing lowest self-esteem, a score of "2" to the next least favorable response, and (when applicable) a score of "3" to the neutral midpoint response ("no opinion" or "neither").

A second scheme is presented as a very simple way to counter the effects of differences in extreme response styles; this scoring ignores distinctions in strength of agreement. Thus, in the collapsed version all positive self-esteem responses (i.e., categories scored "4" and "5" in the full scale version) are assigned a score of "3," negative self-esteem responses ("1" and "2" in the full scale version) are scored "1," and neutral midpoint responses are scored "2."

RESULTS

Examples of Differences in Use of Extreme Response Categories

We begin by providing specific illustrations of black-white differences in responses to two self-esteem items, as shown in Table 2. It should be emphasized that the two items shown in the table are representative of patterns which hold in general across the various items and samples we examined. In Table 2 we have displayed data from two different samples because we want to show both the similarities and the differences which occur across two slightly different five-point response scales (the Monitoring the Future scale ranges from Agree to Disagree while the High School and Beyond scale ranges from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly).

The first item in Table 2 displays in very clear fashion the phenomenon which prompted this report. No matter which response scale is considered, 12-13 percent more of the blacks than the whites check the most positive response, but the difference is neatly reversed on the next most positive response. For both races and both samples we find close to 90 percent indicating some degree of agreement that they are persons of worth "...on an equal plane with others," and only about one in twenty indicating disagreement. Consider now the mean scores for this item: blacks average .10 or .11 higher than whites when the full scale scoring is used; however, the collapsed scoring shows no difference between races.

The second item in Table 2, like the first, has higher percentages of blacks than whites endorsing the most positive self-esteem response; but here there are also twice as many blacks as whites endorsing the lowest self-esteem response (note that now the low self-esteem response is at the agreement end of the scale). On this item (unlike most, as Table 3 will indicate) the full scale scoring yields lower mean

Table 2

Examples of Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem Item Response Distributions

	Full Response Scale[1]			Collapsed Response Scale[1]		
	Black	White	B-W[2]	Black	White	B-W[2]
1. I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others						
Monitoring the Future						
1. Disagree	3.1	1.1	+2.0			
2. Mostly disagree	2.8	3.3	-.5	5.9	4.4	+1.5
3. Neither	5.1	8.6	-3.5	5.1	8.6	-3.5
4. Mostly agree	31.7	43.2	-11.5	89.0	87.1	+1.9
5. Agree	57.3	43.9	+13.4			
Mean[1]	**4.37**	**4.26**	**+.11**	**2.83**	**2.83**	**.00**
High School and Beyond - Seniors						
1. Disagree strongly	.8	.6	+.2			
2. Disagree	4.9	4.4	+.5	5.7	5.0	+.7
3. No opinion	5.3	4.8	+.5	5.3	4.8	+.5
4. Agree	44.8	58.0	-13.2	89.0	90.2	-1.2
5. Agree strongly	44.2	32.2	+12.0			
Mean[1]	**4.27**	**4.17**	**+.10**	**2.83**	**2.85**	**-.02**
2. I feel I do not have much to be proud of						
Monitoring the Future						
1. Agree	7.5	3.3	+4.2			
2. Mostly agree	11.1	8.4	+2.7	18.6	11.7	+6.9
3. Neither	7.4	9.1	-1.7	7.4	9.1	-1.7
4. Mostly disagree	21.3	34.6	-13.3	74.1	79.1	-5.0
5. Disagree	52.8	44.5	+8.3			
Mean[1]	**4.01**	**4.09**	**-.08**	**2.55**	**2.67**	**-.12**
High School and Beyond - Seniors						
1. Agree strongly	5.2	2.4	+2.8			
2. Agree	9.4	8.0	+1.4	14.7	10.4	+4.3
3. No opinion	4.9	4.5	+.4	4.9	4.5	+.4
4. Disagree	36.3	45.5	-9.2	80.4	85.2	-4.8
5. Disagree strongly	44.1	39.6	+4.5			
Mean[1]	**4.05**	**4.12**	**-.07**	**2.66**	**2.75**	**-.09**

[1] Procedures for computing means are outlined in the Methods section.

[2] B-W=Score for Blacks minus score for Whites.

scores for blacks than for whites; the collapsed scoring is even less favorable to blacks.

Comparisons across the two datasets shown in Table 2 reveal mostly similarities, particularly when we look at the columns displaying black-white differences. In particular, it is clear that the black-white differential in willingness to use the extreme response categories remains much the same whether the scale ranges from agree to disagree, or from agree strongly to disagree strongly.

One other observation based on Table 2 is that comparing the mean scores using both full scale and collapsed versions provides a good summary of the "extreme responding effect" evidenced in the complete item distributions. Therefore, the remainder of our reporting focuses primarily on mean scores.[1]

Summary of Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem Responses

Table 3 presents mean score data for each of the self-esteem items in four samples of high school students, all of which used agreement response scales. In addition to the item-level data, the table includes a set of averages (means) of the item means; these are virtually identical to the values that would have been obtained had we computed self-esteem scores for each individual, and then taken overall means.[2] This "total score" section of Table 3 contains the most important finding: for each of the four samples the full-scale scoring yields self-esteem totals which are significantly higher for blacks than for whites (since the standard deviation for all four samples is about 0.7, the black-white differences range from 13 to 21 percent of a standard deviation). In contrast, the collapsed-scale scoring yields no appreciable differences between the races.[3]

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[1]The complete tables of frequency distributions for blacks and whites in all six samples, displayed in a manner identical to that used for the two samples in Table 2, are included in the appendix.

[2]The only difference between the procedures is that our present approach assumes no missing data, an assumption which does not produce any appreciable distortion in terms of our purposes in this paper.

[3]For several reasons we do not routinely report confidence intervals in this paper: first, complexities in the sample designs would require extensive computations of design effects in order to obtain accurate estimates of confidence levels; second, even after such adjustments, the large size of several samples means that trivial differences would reach "statistical" significance; third, the effects of interest here are sufficiently strong and consistent across samples so that we judged the above complications unnecessary. Nevertheless, it may be useful to point out that for each of the samples displayed in Table 3, the black-white differences in "total self-esteem scores" based on full-scale scoring would be significant far beyond the .001 level, even after very conservative adjustments for design effects.

Table 3

Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem Items and Index Means: Four Samples Using Agree-Disagree Response Scales[1]

	Full Response Scale[2]			Collapsed Response Scale[2]		
	Black	White	B-W[3]	Black	White	B-W[3]
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	4.40	4.10	+.30	2.84	2.78	+.06
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980	4.38	4.06	+.32	2.85	2.77	+.08
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980	4.25	3.95	+.30	2.80	2.73	+.07
Nat'l. Long. Study - Seniors, 1972	4.13	3.87	+.26	2.73	2.64	+.09
2. I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	4.37	4.26	+.11	2.83	2.83	.00
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980	4.27	4.17	+.10	2.83	2.85	-.02
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980	4.13	4.04	+.09	2.77	2.80	-.03
Nat'l. Long. Study - Seniors, 1972	4.24	4.10	+.14	2.82	2.82	.00
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	4.45	4.34	+.11	2.87	2.89	-.02
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980	4.26	4.19	+.07	2.84	2.87	-.03
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980	4.14	4.06	+.08	2.78	2.82	-.04
Nat'l. Long. Study - Seniors, 1972	4.16	4.04	+.12	2.80	2.80	.00
4. On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	4.12	4.11	+.01	2.69	2.74	-.05
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980	3.86	3.83	+.03	2.56	2.64	-.08
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980	3.79	3.75	+.04	2.54	2.60	-.06
Nat'l. Long. Study - Seniors, 1972	3.57	3.61	-.04	2.37	2.48	-.11
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	4.01	4.09	-.08	2.55	2.67	-.12
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980	4.05	4.12	-.07	2.66	2.75	-.09
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980	3.87	3.95	-.08	2.55	2.66	-.11
6. Sometimes I think that I am no good at all[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	3.89	3.53	+.36	2.48	2.33	+.15
At times I think that I am no good at all[1]						
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980	3.50	3.04	+.46	2.29	1.98	+.31
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980	3.34	2.86	+.48	2.18	1.85	+.33
7. I feel that I can't do anything right[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	3.96	4.09	-.13	2.53	2.67	-.14
8. I feel that my life is not very useful[1]						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82	4.20	4.23	-.03	2.66	2.74	-.08

Table 3 (continued)
Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem Items and Index Means: Four Samples Using Agree-Disagree Response Scales

	Full Response Scale[4]			Collapsed Response Scale[4]		
	Black	White	B-W[5]	Black	White	B-W[5]
"Total Scores":						
Average of Self-Esteem Item Means						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82(8 items)	4.18	4.09	+.09	2.68	2.71	-.03
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980(6 items)	4.05	3.90	+.15	2.67	2.64	+.03
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980(6 items)	3.92	3.77	+.15	2.60	2.58	+.02
Nat'l. Long. Study - Seniors, 1972(4 items)	4.03	3.91	+.12	2.68	2.69	-.01
Average Percentage of Respondents Selecting Highest-Scored Responses (see text)						
Monitoring the Future - Seniors, 1980-82(8 items)	55.0	42.0	+13.0	80.7	80.2	+0.5
High School and Beyond - Seniors, 1980(6 items)	40.8	27.9	+12.9	81.2	79.9	+1.3
High School and Beyond - Sophomores, 1980(6 items)	35.3	21.9	+13.4	76.4	75.0	+1.4
Nat'l. Long. Study - Seniors, 1972(4 items)	37.2	23.6	+13.6	80.3	80.9	-0.6

[1] Approximate N's used in the analysis- Blacks, Whites (respectively): Monitoring the Future-1119, 7681; High School and Beyond, Seniors- 3626, 20763; High School and Beyond, Sophomores- 3752, 21531; National Longitudinal Study-1969, 12180.

[2] High score indicates agreement.

[3] High score indicates disagreement.

[4] Procedures for computing means are outlined in the Methods section.

[5] B-W = Score for Blacks minus score for Whites.

The bottom section of Table 3 provides one other way of summarizing black-white differences in self-esteem responses. Entries on the bottom left side show that in each of the four samples 13 percent more blacks than whites select the highest self-esteem category, on average. Entries on the bottom right side show that virtually identical percentages of blacks and whites select one of the two highest self-esteem responses; specifically, an average of 80 to 81 percent of both black and white seniors endorse one of the two top self-esteem responses, whereas among sophomores the average is 75 or 76 percent.[4]

We turn now to some comments about individual items. First, although the data are not included in Table 3, it should be noted that each item in each of the four samples (24 items in all) prompted higher proportions of blacks than whites to select the most favorable self-esteem category, while in all but two instances there were higher proportions of whites in the second most favorable category. Thus the average tendencies reported at the bottom of Table 3 are also in evidence for each of the items. Table 3 does present mean scores for each item in each of the four samples, and these show without exception that the collapsed-scale scoring is less "favorable" to blacks than the full-scale scoring.[5] The extent of the shift from one scoring to another varies substantially from item to item, however.

These item differences, incidentally, help to account for the slight overall differences among samples in the "total scores." Thus, if we compute means across just the first four items, which are common to all four samples in Table 3, the black-white differences are virtually identical across the samples (mean differences of about .13 using the full-scale scoring, and about -.01 using the collapsed-scale scoring). If we repeat the exercise for the first five items, which are identical in the Monitoring the Future and High School and Beyond samples, we again get virtually identical results across the three samples (but this time the mean differences are .09 and -.03). The fact that there are well-replicated differences among self-esteem items in their tendencies to generate black-white differences has important implications for any effort to reach a conclusion about whether, and in which direction, the two races actually differ in self-esteem--an issue to which we return in the discussion.

We now turn to the Youth in Transition dataset, which is different in several respects from the four datasets presented in Table 3. First, the Youth in Transition sample was limited to males who were tenth-graders in public schools in the Fall of 1966. Second, the self-

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[4]The slightly lower self-esteem scores among sophomores, compared with seniors, can be attributed primarily to a general pattern of rising self-esteem during late adolescence and early adulthood; furthermore, the sophomore sample includes some individuals who will drop out before the end of senior year, and they have lower than average self-esteem (O'Malley and Bachman 1983).

[5]This is true both in absolute terms and also when the difference is expressed as a percent of the standard deviation.

esteem items were intermixed with a large number of other self-description items, and all of the items used a five-point scale of frequency (almost always, often, sometimes, seldom, never). While in one respect these differences, particularly the different response scale, represent an additional level of complexity in our analysis, we also gain greater levels of confidence in our conclusions if similar findings are obtained in spite of the difference in sample and method. An additional reason for replicating our analysis with the Youth in Transition dataset is the fact that the original findings from this study are widely cited in the literature as showing higher self-esteem scores for blacks than for whites, and we considered it important to discover whether those findings reflected black-white differences in the extreme response style.

The Youth in Transition results are presented in Table 4. Most important, we find that the "total score" using the full response scale shows blacks higher than whites by .09, or about 17 percent of a standard deviation; however, when we shift to the collapsed scoring the difference completely disappears (blacks score .01 lower than whites). At the individual item level, we find in every case that the black-white differences are less "favorable" to blacks when the scoring is shifted from the full-scale to the collapsed-scale version.[6] Some of the item-by-item differences displayed so consistently by the four samples in Table 3 are also evident in Table 4, although there are some exceptions (perhaps because of interactions between item wordings and response scale wordings).

We undertook one further analysis, using data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience (Center for Human Resource Research, 1981).[7] Although the self-esteem items in this study very closely overlap those in the other studies, the sample is somewhat different (based on an age range--15 through 22--rather than school populations) and the data collection method was distinctly different (face-to-face personal interviews rather than group-administered questionnaires). When we examined the individual item frequency distributions from this study, we found some indications of greater extreme responding among blacks than among whites; specifically, on five out of the ten items there were higher percentages of blacks than whites in both the strongly agree and the strongly disagree categories (with no instances of greater percentages of whites at both extremes). And at the individual item level we found some differences that are consistent with those shown in Table 3; in particular, blacks scored lower than whites on the item "I feel I do not have much to be proud of," and they scored higher than whites on the item "At times I think I am no good at all" (see Table 5). Nevertheless, the mean "total scores" are virtually identical for blacks and whites, no matter which scoring method is used.

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[6]In the case of item #7, however, this is true only when we take into account the smaller standard deviation for the collapsed scoring; and even then the effect of the shift is very small.

[7]The authors wish to thank Joan E. Crowley who kindly provided the tabulations from the National Longitudinal Survey.

Table 4

Reanalysis of Youth in Transition Data on Black and White Self-Esteem

	Full Response Scale[1]			Collapsed Response Scale[2]		
	Black	White	B-W[4]	Black	White	B-W[4]
Item Means:						
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself[1] . .	3.84	3.62	+.22	2.58	2.46	+.12
2. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others[1]	4.06	3.88	+.18	2.65	2.62	+.03
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people[1]	3.78	3.75	+.03	2.55	2.59	-.04
4. I feel that I have a number of good qualities[1]	3.89	3.71	+.18	2.62	2.55	+.07
5. I am a useful guy to have around[1]	3.88	3.70	+.18	2.62	2.55	+.07
6. When I do a job I do it well[1]	3.94	3.67	+.27	2.64	2.52	+.12
7. I feel I do not have much to be proud of[2] . .	3.65	3.89	-.24	2.36	2.56	-.20
8. Sometimes I think I am no good at all[2]	3.54	3.47	+.07	2.33	2.35	-.02
9. I feel that I can't do anything right[2]	3.71	3.83	-.12	2.42	2.58	-.16
10. I feel that my life is not very useful[2] . . .	3.99	3.89	+.10	2.57	2.60	-.03
"Total Scores": Average of Item Means	3.83	3.74	+.09	2.53	2.54	-.01
Average Percentage of Respondents Selecting Highest-Scored Responses (see text)	34.0	22.2	+11.8	65.6	62.0	+3.6

[1] High score indicates agreement.

[2] High score indicates disagreement.

[3] Procedures for computing means are outlined in the Methods section.

[4] B-W=Score for Blacks minus score for Whites.

Thus we must conclude that this interview study failed to provide a clear replication of the effect which appeared consistently across the five questionnaire samples summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

DISCUSSION

The analyses presented above have focused on the ways in which self-esteem scores may be affected by black-white differences in response styles. Five out of the six nationwide samples we examined employed paper-and-pencil questionnaires, group-administered in high schools; and these five samples yielded several findings with a high degree of consistency: (a) Blacks are more likely than whites to use the extreme response categories in Rosenberg-type self-esteem items. (b) When these response style differences are permitted to contribute to self-esteem scores (by using traditional scoring methods), there is a modest but significant (approximately .13 to .21SD) tendency for blacks to average higher than whites. (c) When the response style differences are excluded from self-esteem scores (by using a truncated scoring method) the average black-white differences disappear.

The sixth sample, which employed face-to-face interview procedures, failed to provide a clear replication of the paper-and-pencil findings; black-white differences in extreme response style were very weak, and no important self-esteem differences appeared using either scoring method. However, we are not ready to conclude from this one instance that interview studies are largely immune to black-white differences in response styles. On the contrary, we suspect that interview studies represent a good opportunity to examine many of these issues further; in particular, future analysts may wish to explore whether and how race of interviewer interacts with race of respondent in their relationships with response style.

Our earlier analyses revealed the black-white difference in each of five separate questionnaire forms dealing with a wide variety of topic areas; and those analyses also showed that individual differences in use of extreme response categories are quite stable across time (Bachman and O'Malley 1984). Thus, it should be emphasized that we are dealing with response style patterns which are not at all limited to self-esteem measures. In fact, at one point in our preliminary analyses we set out to construct an index of extreme responding which would be unconfounded with self-esteem responses, so we based the index on all available agree-disagree items except for those measuring self-esteem. We found that when we controlled scores on this index of extreme responding, the tendency for blacks to score higher than whites in self-esteem (using the traditional full-scale scoring) was completely eliminated.

Given the complexities introduced by black-white differences in response styles, what can we conclude about whether blacks "really" have higher self-esteem than whites? Our own view is that any firm conclusions about racial differences in self-esteem lie beyond our reach, at least given presently available data. We agree with the authors cited earlier that the burden of proof remains upon those who would argue that

Table 5

Black and White Self-Esteem in an Interview Study: National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Market Experience

	Full Response Scale[4]			Collapsed Response Scale[4]		
	Black	White	B-W[5]	Black	White	B-W[5]
Item Means[1]:						
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself[2]	4.23	4.22	+.01	2.82	2.89	-.07
2. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others[2]	4.46	4.54	-.08	2.94	2.98	-.04
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people[2]	4.34	4.35	-.01	2.93	2.95	-.02
4. On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself[2]	4.13	4.10	+.03	2.80	2.83	-.03
5. I feel that I have a number of good qualities[2]	4.43	4.41	+.02	2.95	2.97	-.02
6. I feel I do not have much to be proud of[3]	4.25	4.42	-.17	2.79	2.90	-.11
7. At times I think I am no good at all[3]	4.14	3.89	+.25	2.72	2.56	+.16
8. All in all, I am inclined to think I'm a failure[3]	4.36	4.49	-.13	2.89	2.94	-.05
9. I certainly feel useless at times[3]	3.47	3.34	+.13	2.29	2.19	+.10
10. I wish I could have more respect for myself[3]	3.36	3.58	-.22	2.21	2.39	-.18
"Total Scores": Average of Item Means	4.12	4.13	-.01	2.73	2.76	-.03
Average Percentage of Respondents Selecting Highest-Scored Responses (see text)	39.8	38.4	+1.4	86.8	88.0	-1.2

[1] Means were calculated using a scoring of 1,2,4,5 in order to maintain comparability.

[2] High score indicates agreement.

[3] High score indicates disagreement.

[4] Procedures for computing means are outlined in the Methods section.

[5] B-W=Score for Blacks minus score for Whites.

blacks have lower self-esteem than whites--at least insofar as young (high school age) people are concerned; but we judge that the present findings also place the burden of proof on any who would assert the opposite conclusion--that blacks have higher self-esteem than whites. One reason for holding this view is that even when average self-esteem scores have appeared higher for blacks than for whites (as in the full-scale scorings in Tables 3 and 4), the differences have been quite modest. But our more basic reason for being pessimistic about drawing "precise" conclusions about black versus white self-esteem is that the race differences in general response styles, and in responses to particular self-esteem items, leave any specific self-esteem measure and scoring open to dispute.

We can dramatize the point above by considering how one might deliberately set about to "demonstrate" higher self-esteem for blacks than for whites, making use of what we have learned from the present analysis. First, one would select those particular self-esteem items which are generally most favorable to blacks (e.g., item #6 in Table 3) and avoid those least favorable (e.g., item #5). Second, one would select a scoring method which takes advantage of the fact that blacks are more willing than whites, on the average, to use the scale extremes (at least on group-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaires). Thus, one would use a full-scale rather than truncated scoring method. Better yet, one might select a scoring scheme which gives even more emphasis to the extreme response categories; for example, one could employ dichotomous scoring in which the highest possible self-esteem response is contrasted with all others. (Incidentally, a distinction between the top category and all others produces greater variance for self-esteem items than any other dichotomous scoring--thus making it appear "reasonable" and "defensible.") Obviously, if one were setting out to "demonstrate" racial differences in the opposite direction, i.e., that white self-esteem equals or exceeds black self-esteem, then one would follow scoring strategies opposite to those described above. We offer these observations not with the expectation that any researcher would actually undertake to "load the dice," but rather as a way of indicating that one can scarcely avoid loading things one way or another--often unwittingly.

It may be useful at this point in the discussion to consider again the Youth in Transition findings on black-white self-esteem. We think the Youth in Transition findings are particularly relevant because, as noted earlier, the original reporting has been widely cited as showing higher self-esteem among blacks--indeed, one important book on black-white self-esteem summarized the findings as showing "black males substantially higher than whites" (Rosenberg and Simmons 1972, p. 7, emphasis added). The original analysis, which included such steps as (a) statistical controls for intelligence and family background and (b) separation of blacks into three categories based on region and school integration, did report higher self-esteem among blacks than whites, along with the speculation that such differences might "...reflect a need among young black men to portray themselves in favorable terms" (Bachman 1970, p. 131). The present analysis does not rule out that possibility, especially since if we repeated the controls for background and test scores we would still find blacks slightly

higher than whites in adjusted scores.[8] Nevertheless, it now seems much more appropriate to rewrite the above-quoted passage and say instead that the black-white differences in self-esteem scores reflect more general black-white differences in response styles, and collapsed scoring (which is one way of adjusting for some response style differences) eliminates the overall black-white differences in the Youth in Transition data.

We do not wish to leave the impression that collapsed or truncated scoring is ordinarily a better or preferable way of dealing with self-esteem measures. We chose the collapsed scoring primarily as a simple and (we hope) convincing method of demonstrating that response style differences can have an important impact on self-esteem scores; but we do not recommend that such a collapsed scoring approach be adopted routinely for self-esteem and other personality measures employing agree-disagree or other Likert-type scales. In the first place, we stated at the outset of this paper our unwillingness to treat black-white differences in response styles as primarily "response errors" on the part of either group; different scoring methods lead to different patterns of results, but we are not prepared to argue that one is fundamentally more valid than the other. In the second place, collapsed scoring which discards distinctions between "strongly agree" and "agree," or between "agree" and "mostly agree," reduces item variance, inter-item correlations, and index reliability--all of which lead to measures which are less sensitive indicators of real changes. Thus, for most analyses, and especially for analyses involving longitudinal data, any wholesale shift toward collapsed scoring might well throw out the baby with the bath-water. On the other hand, we do see considerable advantage in repeating key analyses using collapsed scoring in order to learn whether the basic relationships are completely eliminated (rather than merely attenuated, which is what one would ordinarily expect).

As we stated at the outset, the analysis of racial differences has been a popular undertaking for social scientists. But the thrust of the present report is that some of the findings which emerge can have more to do with response styles than with substantive differences. Thus we repeat the conclusion based on our earlier work in this area: "...those who report on racial differences--and those who make use of such reports--should do so with a great deal of caution" (Bachman and O'Malley 1984).

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[8]We have not repeated those earlier controls because they are not central to the issues raised in the present paper.

APPENDIX: Complete Self-Esteem Item Response Distributions for Six Samples of Youth

Table A-1

Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem, Monitoring the Future, Seniors 1980-1982

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself (5D1a)[1]						
1. Disagree	2.5	1.4	+1.1			
2. Mostly disagree	3.6	5.8	-2.2	6.1	7.2	-1.1
3. Neither	4.0	8.0	-4.0	4.0	8.0	-4.0
4. Mostly agree	31.2	50.9	-19.7	89.9	84.8	+5.1
5. Agree	58.6	33.9	+24.7			
Mean	**4.40**	**4.10**	**+.30**	**2.84**	**2.78**	**+.06**
2. I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others (5D1c)						
1. Disagree	3.1	1.1	+2.0			
2. Mostly disagree	2.8	3.3	-.5	5.9	4.4	+1.5
3. Neither	5.1	8.6	-3.5	5.1	8.6	-3.5
4. Mostly agree	31.7	43.2	-11.5	89.0	87.1	+1.9
5. Agree	57.3	43.9	+13.4			
Mean	**4.37**	**4.26**	**+.11**	**2.83**	**2.83**	**.00**
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people (5D1d)						
1. Disagree	1.4	.7	+.7			
2. Mostly disagree	3.0	2.3	+.7	4.4	3.0	+1.4
3. Neither	4.4	5.1	-.7	4.4	5.1	-.7
4. Mostly agree	31.8	45.7	-13.9	91.2	91.9	-.7
5. Agree	59.4	46.3	+13.1			
Mean	**4.45**	**4.34**	**+.11**	**2.87**	**2.89**	**-.02**
4. On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself (5D1h)						
1. Disagree	4.8	2.4	+2.4			
2. Mostly disagree	7.7	6.5	+1.2	12.5	8.9	+3.6
3. Neither	5.8	8.6	-2.8	5.8	8.6	-2.8
4. Mostly agree	33.8	42.5	-8.7	81.7	82.5	-.8
5. Agree	48.0	40.0	+8.0			
Mean	**4.12**	**4.11**	**+.01**	**2.69**	**2.74**	**-.05**
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of (5D1i)[1]						
1. Agree	7.5	3.3	+4.2			
2. Mostly agree	11.1	8.4	+2.7	18.6	11.7	+6.9
3. Neither	7.4	9.1	-1.7	7.4	9.1	-1.7
4. Mostly disagree	21.3	34.6	-13.3	74.1	79.1	-5.0
5. Disagree	52.8	44.5	+8.3			
Mean	**4.01**	**4.09**	**-.08**	**2.55**	**2.67**	**-.12**

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]
6. Sometimes I think that I am no good at all (5D1n)[3,4]						
1. Agree	9.6	9.9	-.3			
2. Mostly agree	11.3	15.1	-3.8	20.9	25.0	-4.1
3. Neither	10.5	17.4	-6.9	10.5	17.4	-6.9
4. Mostly disagree	17.5	26.8	-9.3	68.6	57.5	+11.1
5. Disagree	51.1	30.7	+20.4			
Mean	**3.89**	**3.53**	**+.36**	**2.48**	**2.33**	**+.15**
7. I feel that I can't do anything right (5D1r)[4]						
1. Agree	8.6	2.8	+5.8			
2. Mostly agree	10.7	7.5	+3.2	19.3	10.2	+9.1
3. Neither	8.8	12.5	-3.7	8.8	12.5	-3.7
4. Mostly disagree	19.7	32.4	-12.7	71.9	77.3	-5.4
5. Disagree	52.2	44.9	+7.3			
Mean	**3.96**	**4.09**	**-.13**	**2.53**	**2.67**	**-.14**
8. I feel that my life is not very useful (5D1u)[4]						
1. Agree	6.0	2.4	+3.6			
2. Mostly agree	6.9	4.8	+2.1	12.9	7.2	+5.7
3. Neither	8.2	11.6	-3.4	8.2	11.6	-3.4
4. Mostly disagree	18.7	29.7	-11.0	78.9	81.2	-2.3
5. Disagree	60.2	51.5	+8.7			
Mean	**4.20**	**4.23**	**-.03**	**2.66**	**2.74**	**-.08**
Average of Means	4.18	4.09	+.09	2.68	2.71	-.03

[1] Entries are percentages. Due to rounding, values may not always add to 100.
[2] Entries are differences in percentages or means (blacks minus whites).
[3] Indicates source is questionnaire Form 5, Part D, Item 1a.
[4] Item scoring reversed.

Table A-2

Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem, High School and Beyond, Seniors 1980

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself (BB058A)[1]						
1. Disagree strongly[1]	.8	1.1	-.3			
2. Disagree	4.4	7.7	-3.3	5.2	8.8	-3.6
3. No opinion	4.5	5.3	-.8	4.5	5.3	-.8
4. Agree	36.2	56.4	-20.2	90.3	85.9	+4.4
5. Agree strongly	54.1	29.6	+24.5			
Mean	**4.38**	**4.08**	**+.32**	**2.85**	**2.77**	**+.08**
2. I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others (BB058C)						
1. Disagree strongly	.8	.6	+.2			
2. Disagree	4.9	4.4	+.5	5.7	5.0	+.7
3. No opinion	5.3	4.8	+.5	5.3	4.8	+.5
4. Agree	44.8	58.0	-13.2	89.0	90.2	-1.2
5. Agree strongly	44.2	32.2	+12.0			
Mean	**4.27**	**4.17**	**+.10**	**2.83**	**2.85**	**-.02**
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people (BB058D)						
1. Disagree strongly	1.1	.5	+.6			
2. Disagree	4.7	4.3	+.4	5.8	4.8	+1.0
3. No opinion	4.3	3.0	+1.3	4.3	3.0	+1.3
4. Agree	47.3	59.9	-12.6	89.9	92.2	-2.3
5. Agree strongly	42.6	32.3	+10.3			
Mean	**4.28**	**4.19**	**+.07**	**2.84**	**2.87**	**-.03**
4. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (BB058H)						
1. Disagree strongly	3.4	1.7	+1.7			
2. Disagree	16.3	14.3	+2.0	19.7	16.1	+3.6
3. No opinion	4.1	4.0	+.1	4.1	4.0	+.1
4. Agree	43.5	58.8	-15.3	76.1	79.9	-3.8
5. Agree strongly	32.6	21.1	+11.5			
Mean	**3.88**	**3.83**	**+.03**	**2.56**	**2.64**	**-.08**
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of (BB058L)						
1. Agree strongly	5.2	2.4	+2.8			
2. Agree	9.4	8.0	+1.4	14.7	10.4	+4.3
3. No opinion	4.9	4.5	+.4	4.9	4.5	+.4
4. Disagree	36.3	45.5	-9.2	80.4	85.2	-4.8
5. Disagree strongly	44.1	39.6	+4.5			
Mean	**4.05**	**4.12**	**-.07**	**2.66**	**2.75**	**-.09**

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]
6. At times I think that I am no good at all (BB058J)						
1. Agree strongly	6.2	6.1	+.1			
2. Agree	25.7	42.3	-16.6	31.9	48.4	-16.5
3. No opinion	6.9	5.8	+1.1	6.9	5.8	+1.1
4. Disagree	34.0	33.4	+.6	61.2	45.9	+15.3
5. Disagree strongly	27.2	12.5	+14.7			
Mean	**3.50**	**3.04**	**+.46**	**2.29**	**1.98**	**+.31**
Average of Means	4.05	3.90	+.15	2.67	2.64	+.03

[1] Entries are percentages. Due to rounding, values may not always add to 100.
[2] Entries are differences in percentages or means (blacks minus whites).
[3] Indicates source is base year question, asked of both grade levels, #58 A on the senior questionnaire.
[4] Originally items were scored 1=Disagree strongly, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Agree strongly, 5=No opinion.

Table A-3

Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem, High School and Beyond, Sophomores 1980

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself (BB058A)[1]						
1. Disagree strongly[4]	1.0	1.0	.0			
2. Disagree	4.9	7.5	-2.6	6.0	8.6	-2.6
3. No opinion	8.3	9.9	-1.6	8.3	9.9	-1.6
4. Agree	39.0	58.1	-19.1	85.8	81.5	+4.3
5. Agree strongly	46.7	23.4	+23.3			
Mean	**4.25**	**3.95**	**+.30**	**2.80**	**2.73**	**+.07**
2. I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others (BB058C)						
1. Disagree strongly	1.5	.8	+.7			
2. Disagree	5.7	5.1	+.6	7.2	5.8	+1.4
3. No opinion	8.2	8.4	-.2	8.2	8.4	-.2
4. Agree	47.6	60.6	-13.0	84.5	85.7	-1.2
5. Agree strongly	36.9	25.1	+11.8			
Mean	**4.13**	**4.04**	**+.09**	**2.77**	**2.80**	**-.03**
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people (BB058D)						
1. Disagree strongly	1.5	.7	+.8			
2. Disagree	6.3	6.0	+.3	7.8	6.7	+1.1
3. No opinion	6.4	5.1	+1.3	6.4	5.1	+1.3
4. Agree	48.3	63.2	-14.9	85.9	88.2	-2.3
5. Agree strongly	37.5	25.0	+12.5			
Mean	**4.14**	**4.08**	**+.08**	**2.78**	**2.82**	**-.04**
4. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself (BB058H)						
1. Disagree strongly	4.2	2.1	+2.1			
2. Disagree	15.9	14.6	+1.3	20.0	16.8	+3.2
3. No opinion	6.4	6.6	-.2	6.4	6.6	-.2
4. Agree	44.1	59.8	-15.7	73.6	76.7	-3.1
5. Agree strongly	29.5	16.9	+12.6			
Mean	**3.79**	**3.75**	**+.04**	**2.54**	**2.60**	**-.06**
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of (BB058L)						
1. Agree strongly	6.5	3.2	+3.3			
2. Agree	12.4	10.0	+2.4	18.8	13.2	+5.6
3. No opinion	7.6	7.4	+.2	7.6	7.4	+.2
4. Disagree	35.3	47.5	-12.2	73.6	79.5	-5.9
5. Disagree strongly	38.3	31.9	+6.4			
Mean	**3.87**	**3.95**	**-.08**	**2.55**	**2.68**	**-.11**

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]
6. At times I think that I am no good at all (BB058J)						
1. Agree strongly	7.1	7.7	-.6			
2. Agree	29.7	45.6	-15.9	36.7	53.3	-16.6
3. No opinion	8.2	8.6	-.4	8.2	8.6	-.4
4. Disagree	32.3	29.1	+3.2	55.1	38.1	+17.0
5. Disagree strongly	22.8	8.9	+13.9			
Mean	**3.34**	**2.86**	**+.48**	**2.18**	**1.85**	**+.33**
Average of Means	3.92	3.77	+.15	2.60	2.58	+.02

[1] Entries are percentages. Due to rounding, values may not always add to 100.
[2] Entries are differences in percentages or means (blacks minus whites).
[3] Indicates source is base year question, asked of both grade levels, #58 A on the senior questionnaire.
[4] Originally items were scored 1=Disagree strongly, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Agree strongly, 5=No opinion.

Table A-4

Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem, National Longitudinal Study, Seniors 1972

	Full Response Scale[1]			Collapsed Response Scale[2]		
	Bl[3]	Wh[3]	B-W[4]	Bl[3]	Wh[3]	B-W[4]
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself (Q21A)[5]						
1. Disagree strongly	1.4	1.5	-.2			
2. Disagree	7.0	11.6	-4.6	8.4	13.2	-4.8
3. No opinion	10.4	9.3	+1.1	10.4	9.3	+1.1
4. Agree	39.8	53.3	-13.5	81.3	77.5	+3.7
5. Strongly agree	41.5	24.2	+17.2			
Mean	**4.13**	**3.87**	**+.26**	**2.73**	**2.64**	**+.09**
2. I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others (Q21C)						
1. Disagree strongly	1.5	.9	+.7			
2. Disagree	4.2	5.1	-.9	5.7	5.9	-.2
3. No opinion	6.0	6.1	-.1	6.0	6.1	-.1
4. Agree	45.2	58.9	-13.7	88.2	88.0	+.2
5. Strongly agree	43.0	29.2	+13.9			
Mean	**4.24**	**4.10**	**+.14**	**2.82**	**2.82**	**.00**
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people (Q21D)						
1. Disagree strongly	1.0	.6	+.5			
2. Disagree	6.1	7.0	-.9	7.2	7.6	-.5
3. No opinion	5.9	4.6	+1.2	5.9	4.6	+1.2
4. Agree	49.9	63.4	-13.5	87.0	87.7	-.7
5. Strongly agree	37.1	24.4	+12.7			
Mean	**4.18**	**4.04**	**+.12**	**2.80**	**2.80**	**.00**
4. On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself (Q21H)						
1. Disagree strongly	7.2	3.5	+3.8			
2. Disagree	20.6	19.1	+1.5	27.8	22.5	+5.3
3. No opinion	7.5	7.0	+.5	7.5	7.0	+.5
4. Agree	37.5	53.8	-16.3	64.7	70.5	-5.8
5. Strongly agree	27.2	16.7	+10.5			
Mean	**3.57**	**3.81**	**-.04**	**2.37**	**2.48**	**-.11**
Average of Means	4.03	3.91	+.12	2.68	2.69	-.01

[1] Original scoring was; 1=Agree strongly, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Disagree strongly, 5=No opinion.
[2] Coded 1=Disagree, 2=No opinion, 3=Agree.
[3] Entries are percentages. Due to rounding, values may not always add to 100.
[4] Entries are differences in percentages or means (blacks minus whites).
[5] Indicates source is question 21 A.

Table A-5

Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem, Youth in Transition, Sophomores 1966

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself (A29R)[3]						
1. Never true	1.8	1.2	+.6			
2. Seldom true	7.0	7.7	-.7	8.8	8.9	-.1
3. Sometimes true	23.9	35.9	-12.0	23.9	35.9	-12.0
4. Often true	40.1	38.7	+1.4	67.3	55.2	+12.1
5. Almost always true	27.1	16.5	+10.6			
Mean	**3.84**	**3.62**	**+.22**	**2.58**	**2.46**	**+.12**
2. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others (A5R)						
1. Never true	2.8	1.3	+1.5			
2. Seldom true	6.0	4.5	+1.5	8.9	5.8	+3.1
3. Sometimes true	17.1	26.9	-9.8	17.1	26.9	-9.8
4. Often true	29.9	39.8	-9.9	74.0	67.4	+6.6
5. Almost always true	44.1	27.6	+16.5			
Mean	**4.06**	**3.88**	**+.18**	**2.65**	**2.62**	**+.03**
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people (A19R)						
1. Never true	1.7	.3	+1.4			
2. Seldom true	6.6	4.3	+2.3	8.4	4.6	+3.8
3. Sometimes true	28.6	31.4	-2.8	28.6	31.4	-2.8
4. Often true	37.6	48.5	-10.9	63.1	64.0	-.9
5. Almost always true	25.4	15.5	+9.9			
Mean	**3.78**	**3.75**	**+.03**	**2.55**	**2.59**	**-.04**
4. I feel that I have a number of good qualities(A9R)						
1. Never true	2.1	.6	+1.5			
2. Seldom true	7.4	4.4	+3.0	9.5	5.0	+4.5
3. Sometimes true	18.7	35.2	-16.5	18.7	35.2	-16.5
4. Often true	43.0	42.9	+.1	71.8	59.8	+12.0
5. Almost always true	28.9	16.9	+12.0			
Mean	**3.89**	**3.71**	**+.18**	**2.82**	**2.55**	**+.07**
5. I am a useful guy to have around (A1R)						
1. Never true	.7	.3	+.4			
2. Seldom true	3.1	2.0	+1.1	3.8	2.3	+1.5
3. Sometimes true	30.1	40.5	-10.4	30.1	40.5	-10.4
4. Often true	39.4	41.9	-2.5	66.1	57.2	+8.9
5. Almost always true	26.7	15.3	+11.4			
Mean	**3.88**	**3.70**	**+.18**	**2.62**	**2.55**	**+.07**

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]
6. When I do a job I do it well (A48R)[3]						
1. Never true	1.1	.6	+.5			
2. Seldom true	3.2	4.4	-1.2	4.3	5.0	-.7
3. Sometimes true	27.7	37.7	-10.0	27.7	37.7	-10.0
4. Often true	36.9	42.0	-5.1	68.1	57.4	+10.7
5. Almost always true	31.2	15.4	+15.8			
Mean	**3.94**	**3.67**	**+.27**	**2.64**	**2.52**	**+.12**
7. I feel I do not have much to be proud of (A24)[3]						
1. Almost always true	9.0	5.1	+3.9			
2. Often true	13.9	7.9	+6.0	22.9	13.0	+9.9
3. Sometimes true	18.1	17.6	+.5	18.1	17.6	+.5
4. Seldom true	21.5	32.1	-10.6	59.0	69.5	-10.5
5. Never true	37.5	37.4	+.1			
Mean	**3.65**	**3.89**	**-.24**	**2.38**	**2.56**	**-.20**
8. Sometimes I think I am no good at all (A39)[3]						
1. Almost always true	9.4	4.7	+4.7			
2. Often true	13.5	12.3	+1.2	22.9	16.9	+6.0
3. Sometimes true	20.8	30.9	-10.0	20.8	30.9	-10.1
4. Seldom true	26.0	36.2	-10.2	56.3	52.2	+4.1
5. Never true	30.2	16.0	+14.2			
Mean	**3.54**	**3.47**	**+.07**	**2.33**	**2.35**	**-.02**
9. I feel that I can't do anything right (A13)[3]						
1. Almost always true	9.5	2.6	+6.9			
2. Often true	9.5	7.2	+2.3	19.0	9.8	+9.2
3. Sometimes true	20.4	22.5	-2.1	20.4	22.5	-2.1
4. Seldom true	21.1	39.5	-18.4	60.6	67.7	-7.1
5. Never true	39.4	28.2	+11.2			
Mean	**3.71**	**3.83**	**-.12**	**2.42**	**2.58**	**-.16**
10. I feel that my life is not very useful (A63)[3]						
1. Almost always true	7.2	3.7	+3.5			
2. Often true	6.1	5.7	+.4	13.3	9.4	+3.9
3. Sometimes true	16.8	21.0	-4.2	16.8	21.0	-4.2
4. Seldom true	20.1	36.6	-16.5	69.9	69.5	+.4
5. Never true	49.8	32.9	+16.9			
Mean	**3.99**	**3.89**	**+.10**	**2.57**	**2.60**	**-.03**
Average of Means	3.83	3.74	+.09	2.53	2.54	-.01

[1] Entries are percentages. Due to rounding, values may not always add to 100.
[2] Entries are differences in percentages or means (blacks minus whites).
[3] Indicates source is section A, question 29, coding reversed from original.

Table A-6

Black-White Differences in Self-Esteem, OSU Labor Market Experience Study, Ages 15-22, 1980.

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[1]
1. I take a positive attitude toward myself (3051)[1]						
1. Strongly disagree[4]	1.6	.6	+1.0			
2. Disagree	7.6	5.0	+2.6	9.1	5.6	+3.5
4. Agree	48.5	60.8	-12.3	91.0	94.4	-3.4
5. Strongly agree	42.5	33.7	+8.8			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.23**	**4.22**	**+.01**	**2.82**	**2.89**	**-.07**
2. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others (3046)						
1. Strongly disagree	.8	.1	+.7			
2. Disagree	2.2	.9	+1.3	3.0	1.0	+2.0
4. Agree	44.7	43.7	+1.0	97.1	99.1	-2.0
5. Strongly agree	52.4	55.4	-3.0			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.46**	**4.54**	**-.08**	**2.94**	**2.98**	**-.04**
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people (3049)						
1. Strongly disagree	1.0	.4	+.6			
2. Disagree	2.7	2.0	+.7	3.7	2.4	+1.3
4. Agree	54.9	57.6	-2.7	96.3	97.6	-1.3
5. Strongly agree	41.5	40.0	+1.5			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.34**	**4.35**	**-.01**	**2.93**	**2.95**	**-.02**
4. On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself (3052)						
1. Strongly disagree	1.3	.6	+.7			
2. Disagree	8.6	8.0	+.6	9.9	8.6	+1.3
4. Agree	55.8	64.0	-8.2	90.1	91.4	-1.4
5. Strongly agree	34.3	27.4	+6.9			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.13**	**4.10**	**+.03**	**2.80**	**2.83**	**-.03**
5. I feel that I have a number of good qualities (3047)						
1. Strongly disagree	.6	.1	+.5			
2. Disagree	1.8	1.5	+.3	2.4	1.6	+.8
4. Agree	49.5	54.6	-5.1	97.6	98.4	-.8
5. Strongly agree	48.1	43.8	+4.3			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.43**	**4.41**	**+.02**	**2.95**	**2.97**	**-.02**

	Full Response Scale			Collapsed Response Scale		
	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]	Bl[1]	Wh[1]	B-W[2]
6. I feel I do not have much to be proud of (3050)						
1. Strongly agree	1.8	.9	+.9			
2. Agree	8.6	4.1	+4.5	10.3	5.0	+5.3
4. Disagree	43.4	41.9	+1.5	89.7	95.0	-5.3
5. Strongly disagree	46.4	53.1	-6.7			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.25**	**4.42**	**-.17**	**2.79**	**2.90**	**-.11**
7. At times I think I am no good at all (3055)						
1. Strongly agree	1.8	2.0	-.2			
2. Agree	12.5	20.1	-7.6	14.2	22.1	-7.9
4. Disagree	42.8	43.0	-.2	85.8	78.0	+7.8
5. Strongly disagree	43.1	35.0	+8.1			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.14**	**3.89**	**+.25**	**2.72**	**2.56**	**+.16**
8. All in all, I am inclined to think I'm a failure (3048)						
1. Strongly agree	.8	.4	+.4			
2. Agree	4.5	2.8	+1.7	5.3	3.1	+2.2
4. Disagree	47.8	42.2	+5.8	94.7	96.9	-2.2
5. Strongly disagree	46.9	54.8	-7.9			
Mean Scored 1-5	**4.38**	**4.49**	**-.13**	**2.89**	**2.94**	**-.05**
9. I certainly feel useless at times (3054)						
1. Strongly agree	3.2	2.6	+.6			
2. Agree	32.4	38.3	-5.9	35.6	40.9	-5.3
4. Disagree	43.7	40.9	+2.8	64.5	59.2	+5.3
5. Strongly disagree	20.8	18.3	+2.5			
Mean Scored 1-5	**3.47**	**3.34**	**+.13**	**2.29**	**2.19**	**+.10**
10. I wish I could have more respect for myself (3053)						
1. Strongly agree	7.5	3.5	+4.0			
2. Agree	31.8	27.1	+4.7	39.3	30.6	+8.7
4. Disagree	38.9	47.0	-8.1	60.7	69.5	-8.8
5. Strongly disagree	21.9	22.5	-.6			
Mean Scored 1-5	**3.38**	**3.58**	**-.22**	**2.21**	**2.39**	**-.18**
Average of Means(1-5)	4.12	4.13	-.01	2.73	2.76	-.03

[1] Entries are percentages. Due to rounding, values may not always add to 100.
[2] Entries are differences in percentages or means (blacks minus whites).
[3] Variable number for reference.
[4] Means were calculated using a scoring of 1,2,4,5 in order to maintain comparability. Originally items were scored 1=Strongly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly disagree.

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